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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate college students (N=168) toward a reported incident of domestic turbulence. The five independent variables investigated were gender, marital status, age, family structure, and personal experiences with abuse. Two scenarios were used; one contained a provocation statement by the wife and the other did not. The scores of statements following the hypothetical police report were the dependent variables. The five statements concerned Seriousness of Incident, Responsibility of the Husband, Responsibility of the Wife, Decision to Call the Police, and Charging the Husband with Assault. Fifty-five comparisons plus 20 recurring comparisons were made. Of the 55 comparisons, 30 were for main effects and 25 were for interactions. Five of the main effect comparisons and four of the interaction comparisons were statistically significant at the .05 level. The findings revealed that subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated the Responsibility of the Husband, Decision to Call the Police, Seriousness of the Incident, and Charging the Husband with Assault statistically higher than did subjects who received the provocation scenario. Subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Responsibility of the Wife higher than did subjects who received the no provocation scenario. Several interactions were found between scenario type and marital status of the respondent. (Questionnaires are appended. Contains 32 references.) (Author/NB)

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ED 362 826

MARITAL VIOLENCE: THE EFFECT OF PROVOCATION ON COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF AN INCIDENT OF WIFE ABUSE

being

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Fort Hays State University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science

by

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The Graduate Committee of Nancy Meade hereby approves her thesis as meeting partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science.

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Abstract

The purpose of the researcher was to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate college students toward a reported incident of domestic turbulence. The five independent variables investigated were gender, marital status, age, family structure, and personal experiences with abuse. Two scenarios were utilized; one contained a provocation statement by the wife and the other did not. The scores of statements following the hypothetical police report were the dependent variables. The 5 statements concerned Seriousness of Incident, Responsibility of the Husband, Responsibility of Wife, decision to Call Police, and Charging Husband with Assault. The total sample size was 168 undergraduate students which included 75 male and 93 female subjects. Five composite null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance. Fifty-five comparisons plus 20 recurring comparisons were made. Of the 55 comparisons made, 30 were main effects and 25 were interactions. Of the 30 main effects, 5 were statistically significant at the .05 level. Of the 25 interactions, 4 were statistically significant at the .05 level.

Introduction

Historical Dimensions

The assault of women by men is a form of private violence occurring between intimates. Because of the private nature of the act and the tendency to see the behavior as normative, historians have failed to write a comprehensive social history of wife assault (Dutton, 1988).

While no comprehensive social history exists, there is ample evidence of misogyny. Little is known about the actual prevalence of wife assault during the Middle Ages but the writings of the early church fathers and the Civil Codes that existed granted to the male the legal right to use whatever means necessary, including physical violence, to protect his absolute power in the family (Davidson, 1978).

Dobash and Dobash (1979) reported that "The first legal rejection of chastisement occurred in England in 1829, when the act that gave a husband the right to chastise his wife was erased from the statute book" (p. 63). The plight of women in England led John Stuart Mill in 1869 to write "The Subjection of Women," a piece referred to by many as the first significant document to

address the assault of women by husbands (Dutton, 1988). British common law allowed a man to beat his wife with a rod no bigger than his thumb. Even when the "rule of thumb" became illegal, family violence and, more specifically, wife assault was systematically ignored (Davidson, 1978).

It has been only within the past three decades that wife assault has come to be identified as a public issue in the United States. It was not until 1972 that a heading of spouse abuse appeared in the social science indexes signifying its recognition by academicians (Gondolf, 1985).

The behavior that is defined as wife assault today existed throughout American History (Bullough, 1974). Gordon (1988) suggested that both the definition of and the reaction to wife assault was dependent on the existing political climate of the times. Wife assault is a changing historical and cultural issue and, as such, has gone through periods of rediscovery and redefinition.

The social movements of the 1960's, the Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-War Movement, the second women's movement, and the child protection movement collectively created an atmosphere in which wife assault could be recognized and responded to (Gordon, 1988). Behavior that had been explained as "natural" (Snell, Rosenwald & Robey, 1964) or a consequence of victim provocation (Gondolf,

1985) or masochistic tendencies on the part of the victim (Schechter, 1982) came to be seen in a new light once the sanctity of family privacy and the privileged position of the male head of the family were questioned.

Theoretical Approaches to Judgment of Violence

The societal recognition of wife assault has been accompanied by attempts to understand the factors which effect people's perceptions of such violence. The major theories that have been advanced to explain perception of domestic violence included Heider's (1958) balance theory, The Just World (Lerner, 1980) and variants of attribution theory (Bohart & Todd, 1988; Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Shaver, 1970; Walster, 1966).

Just World Theory. Lerner (1980) postulated that people are led to believe that in a just world, everyone deserves what they get, since they get what they deserve. This postulate is consistent with several studies in which innocent victims were blamed or held responsible for their fate (Wagstaff & Quirk, 1983; Lea & Hunsberger, 1990).

The central theme of Lerner's Just World Theory (Lerner, 1980) is that "we want to believe that the world is constructed in such a way that terrible things happen to people because they are 'terrible' to others" (p. 73). Making a judgment about victimization requires that order be restored in some way by an observer so that the incident

does not threaten the belief that the world is just (Ryan, 1971). Dutton (1988) suggested that to protect these beliefs, "in the case of the assaulted woman, viewing her as provoking or enjoying the violence or as being psychologically flawed are all ways of restoring a belief in a just world" (p. 99).

Research by Kristiansen and Giulietti (1990) indicated that males blamed and derogated the wife/victim more as their attitudes toward women became less favorable. In contrast, females with positive attitudes toward women blamed but did not derogate the victim more as their just-world beliefs became stronger. This finding suggested that in blaming a victim, females with positive attitudes toward women were able to distance themselves from the possibility of their own victimization.

Balance Theory. According to Heider (1958) there is a "balance" or psychological uniformity involved in the way events are construed. Positive traits, events, and attributes are organized in the mind to fit together into one unit and similarly, negative traits, events, and attributes are bound together. The world is perceived as consistent, therefore vague stimuli will have to be organized to fit together to fabricate an integrated picture of an event.

One study (Shor, 1957, cited by Heider, 1958), suggested that the perception of one person can be influenced by the way he discerns another person. The experiment involved showing a movie to two groups of subjects. One group was told that A was a good person, fair-minded and popular and he was shown fighting with B. The second group was told that A was aggressive and unpopular. Consistent with balance theory, when A was described as good, B was ascribed negative traits. When A was represented as aggressive, B was assigned positive traits.

In their study on perceptions of wife abuse, Kristiansen and Giulietti (1990) found "men's perceptions and attributions regarding wife abuse appear to be a function of their attitudes toward women and their need to maintain cognitive balance" (p. 187). Women's perceptions and attributions of the female victim of abuse appeared to be contingent on attitudes toward women and their need to control. These gender differences were identical to those described by Shotland and Goodstein (1983).

Gender differences were not significant in predicting perceptions of victimization in one study. Miller, Smith, Ferree, and Taylor (1976) concluded that responses to video taped scenes of patients with their doctor after receiving injuries, reflected attempts to maintain

cognitive balance among social perceptions of a culpable driver, an innocent pedestrian, and a rape victim. According to Ryan (1971) the concept of a neutral observer may be a fallacy. The observer is linked to or identified with the system that oppressed the victim, either through profit or ideological ties.

Attribution Theory. Attribution theory is based on the rationale that humans are "naive scientists". In order to predict and control what happens to them, humans must figure out what causes behavior; their own and others. In the case of judging causality as it relates to domestic violence, the observer must search his own experience and values to identify and recognize inappropriate anger (Bohart & Todd, 1988).

From the aggressor's perspective, it is most common to externalize the cause of violence and thus blame qualities of his wife or women in general [for example 'Just like a woman' (Zuk, 1984)]. According to Peterson and Seligman (1983), the victim's perspective is more likely to include internalizing the source of the problem. This implies that due to certain traits within herself, she deserves the abuse. These attributions elicit feelings of low self-esteem.

Both partners may be involved in impression management in that they will manipulate the perceptions of causality.

If one can attribute the abuse to alcohol use, job pressure, spouses' laziness, children, family of origin, or illness, for example, it externalizes the reason or reasons for the abuse. This function of blaming tends to protect self-esteem and self-worth (Weiner, Amirkhan, Folkes, & Verette, 1987).

Shaver's (1970) defensive attribution theory, posited that the more one has in common with the victim, the less likely they would be to attribute the responsibility to the victim. Thus, women would tend to blame men more because they can relate to the possibility that they might share the same fate.

Factors Effecting Judgment of Domestic Turbulence

Factors associated with discerning responsibility in a domestic dispute might be related to the respondents uniqueness. Some of the variables cited in the literature pertaining to judgment of domestic turbulence were gender, age, marital status, family origin, and actual observation or participation in domestic abuse.

Gender. Gender stereotypes are a result of the belief that the two sexes have different personality attributes. One example would be that females are more oriented to goals of harmony while men have competitive goals (Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968; Spence, Deaux, & Helmreich, 1985). Attributes of men are

portrayed as self-enhancing and concerned with exercising their will on others. Women are depicted as respondents to the needs of others (Ashmore & DelBoca, 1979). Differences as to the approach men and women take to issues of justice in Gilligan's study (1982, cited by Cohen, 1991) suggested that women's approach is in terms of caring and men's approach is in terms of rights. In their study, Kristiansen and Giulietti (1990) found that the men with lower scores on the attitudes toward women scale (AWS) blamed women more for an incident of domestic agitation. Women who had high scores on the AWS also blamed the female. This result was interpreted as an attempt to disassociate from the possibility of their own victimization.

Marital status. Gerber (1988) found that differences in the power structure within a marriage followed a belief about roles that the couple had observed. Two studies (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; & Scanzoni, 1982, cited by Gerber, 1991) supported the stereotype of a traditional marriage as one in which women were followers and men were leaders. Given a choice in how to respond to an altercation between a husband and wife, the married subjects had additional knowledge of the intricacies of the dyad's power construct (Gerber, 1988). Married subjects would process judgment

through past or present cognitions related to their own experience (Anderson, Lepper, & Ross, 1980).

Age. The age of the subject could be a determinant in judging the culpability of a husband or wife in a scenario of domestic trouble. According to Lerner (1991), it might indicate a need by younger, immature students to restore order by blaming someone. Operating on a simple good-bad association, there appeared to be a "requiredness that is generated between the value of an act, the person, and the outcome" (p. 26). Perhaps the more sophisticated and urbane the subjects, the less likely they would be influenced by orientations to reward or blame (Lerner, 1980).

Family structure. Family structure is an important social system which has an influential role in self regulation (Bandura, 1978). A traditional family of two never divorced parents might lead respondents to blame the wife in a heated argument due to the unequal power roles (Straus & Gelles, 1986). Attribution theories would have the subject identifying what is appropriate behavior from their experience and judging causes of the dispute (Bohart & Todd, 1988). Lerner (1991) explained his social psychological theory of justice as a judgment that someone, or some category of people, are entitled to an outcome by virtue of who they are or what they have done. Social

institutions, such as the family, would define entitlements and obligations, according to Lerner's theory.

Experience with domestic abuse. Personal involvement with domestic abuse and judgment concerning a fictitious police report might show less blaming. According to Kelley's (1973) analysis of causal attributions, the observation of shared fate did not suggest personal or internal explanations. Rather, the explanation revolved around a situational or external explanation which did not effect self-esteem. The incident described might be deemed as relatively harmless in light of personal experiences. Taylor, Wood, and Lichtman (1983) described one of the strategies of reducing the feelings of being victimized as downward comparisons. An example would be that the domestic incident could have been much worse or seeking a meaning to explain the event, thus enhancing one's own coping skill.

Theorists have postulated many explanations as to why domestic violence occurred in particular families and what circumstances appeared to relate to its continuation. The attribution of blaming or making a judgment, as a witness to a dispute, is another method of framing the question as to why abuse happens.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the researcher was to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate college students toward a reported incident of domestic turbulence.

Rationale and Importance of the Research

The present study was important because it provided information about the attitudes of college students toward an incident of domestic turbulence. The results of this study may contribute to understanding the complexity of judgments made on behalf of others. Knowledge pertaining to the characteristics of the observer, age, gender, and background could possibly define elements that merit further investigation. The effect of provocation on judgment might give some evidence as to how the maintenance of stereotypes alleviates some, if not all, the responsibilities of the couple as described in the scenarios. This study could be used as preliminary research and enlarged to include additional variants such as social class and race.

Students preparing for a career in counseling may be encouraged by this material to examine the vagaries of their own personal judgment strategies. Instructors could incorporate salient information into their discussions on the reasoning for legitimizing particular opinions which may not have a basis in fact or logic.

Composite Null Hypotheses

All null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level.

(1) The differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to gender and type of scenario will not be statistically significant.

(2) The differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to marital status and type of scenario will not be statistically significant.

(3) The differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to age and type of scenario will not be statistically significant.

(4) The differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to family structure and type of scenario will not be statistically significant.

(5) The differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to personal experience and type of scenario will not be statistically significant.

Independent Variables and Rationale

The independent variables investigated were gender, marital status, age, family structure, and personal experiences with abuse. The independent variables were selected for the following reasons: to examine various dimensions of blaming behavior associated with perceptions of violence toward women and to compare the results with other research that appears inconclusive.

Definition of Variables

Independent Variables

All independent variables were self reported. The following independent variables were investigated:

(1) gender--two levels,

level 1, male, and
level 2, female;

(2) marital status--three levels determined post hoc,

level 1, never married,
level 2, married and
level 3, other;

(3) age--four levels,

level 1, age 18 or under,
level 2, age 19-21,
level 3, age 22-25,
level 4, age 26+;

(4) family structure--four levels determined post hoc,

level 1, two biological parents,
level 2, one biological, one step-parent,
level 3, one single divorced parent, and
level 4, other;

(5) personal experience with abusive situations--four levels,

level 1, none,
level 2, one,
level 3, two, and
level 4, three.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables were scores from each of the five questions from the scenario questionnaire.

Scenario Types

The first scenario (Appendix A) was in the form of a fictitious police report and contained a provocation statement by the wife. The second scenario (Appendix B) was an identical police report with the exception that it did not have any reference to verbal provocation by the wife.

Limitations

The following may have effected the results of the present study:

1. the sample was not random,
2. all information was self reported, and
3. all subjects were from one university.

Delimitations

The following were not included:

1. pilot study of the instrument,
2. reliability of the instrument, and
3. validity of the instrument.

Methodology

Setting

The study was conducted at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. The university is located in north central Kansas and is a state funded, liberal arts institution with a combined enrollment of graduate and undergraduate students of approximately 5,500. The student

population reflects the rural background of the area. The main industries are farming, oil, natural gas refining and exploration, and light manufacturing. The population of Hays, Kansas is approximately 18,000.

Subjects

Permission was obtained from three instructors in the social science department to survey 172 undergraduate students. Four questionnaires were incomplete making a total of 168. Over half (69%) of the students were in the 19-21 age group. The sample consisted of 75 male and 93 female subjects.

Instruments

The researcher employed two instruments for collecting data. Both were developed by the researcher. One, a demographic sheet, asked questions pertaining to the following: gender, marital status, age, family of origin, and personal experience (see Appendix C). The second instrument was a questionnaire consisting of five statements (see Appendixes A & B). A Likert scale was utilized with ratings of 1 to 5. The lower the rating, the more agreement with the statement (1, depicted strongly agree and 5, strongly disagree). The scores from each question were employed as a dependent variable.

Before developing the questionnaire, the researcher surveyed the literature. The following steps were implemented:

1. the researcher wrote questions for a questionnaire;

2. the researcher asked a professor of sociology her opinion regarding the appropriateness of the questions,

3. the researcher met with the thesis advisor,

4. three professors in counseling education were asked for suggestions regarding the questionnaire, and

5. the researcher selected questions and compiled the questionnaire.

Materials

The researcher developed two scenarios in the form of police reports. The scenarios were adopted from a study by Kristiansen and Giulietti (1990). Scenario A contained a provocation statement by the wife in response to the husband's anger at her for not having dinner prepared on time (see Appendix A). Scenario B (see Appendix B) did not contain the provocation statement.

Design

A nested design was employed. The following independent variables of gender, marital status, age, family of origin, and personal experience were used with the two scenarios. Half of the subjects received a copy of

scenario A which contained a verbal provocation statement. The other half received a copy of Scenario B which did not contain a provocation statement.

All subjects completed a five-item questionnaire. The scores from each of the questions were used as dependent variables. The following designs were employed:

composite null hypothesis number 1, a 2 x 2 factorial design,

composite null hypothesis number 2, a 2 x 3 factorial design,

composite null hypothesis number 3, a 2 x 4 factorial design,

composite null hypothesis number 4, a 2 x 4 factorial design, and

composite null hypothesis number 5, a 2 x 4 factorial design.

McMillan and Schumacher (1984) identified 10 threats to internal validity which were dealt with in the following ways:

(1) history; did not pertain because the present study was status survey;

(2) selection; all subject present were included;

(3) statistical regression; did not pertain to the present study because there were no extreme subjects;

(4) testing; did not pertain because the present study was status survey;

(5) instrumentation; did not pertain because the present study was status survey;

(6) mortality; all subjects present were included;

(7) maturation; did not pertain because the study was status survey;

(8) diffusion of treatment; did not pertain to the present study because no treatment was administered;

(9) experimenter bias; the same instructions were given to all groups for data collecting, and no treatment was administered;

(10) statistical conclusion; two mathematical assumptions were violated; sampling was not random, there were not equal numbers in cells (a general linear model was used to correct for lack of equal numbers in cells), and the results were not projected beyond the statistical procedures employed.

McMillan and Schumacher (1984) identified two threats to external validity which were dealt with in the following ways:

(1) population external validity; the sample was not random; therefore, the results should be generalized only to similar populations, and

(2) ecological external validity; the instruments were administered under standard conditions and no treatment was provided.

Data Collection Procedure

Three professors in the social science department gave permission to survey their students. The researcher was introduced by the instructor as a graduate student in counseling who was working toward completing a thesis. The subjects were told that they would receive extra credit (5 points) if they chose to participate.

The researcher read from a prepared script (Appendix D), and handed out the two instruments. The demographic sheet and the questionnaire were assigned a common number. The odd numbered were those that contained a provocation statement within the scenario and the even numbered contained no reference to verbal provocation by the wife.

The students were handed the instruments according to their regular seating arrangement. After completing the instruments, the students put their copies into a box on the front desk.

The researcher examined the instruments for completeness. Four were discarded, leaving a total of 168. The instruments were coded in preparation for analysis by the mainframe computer at Fort Hays State University.

Research Procedures

The following steps were implemented:

1. a topic was selected based on the researcher's interest and brief review of research,

2. a computer search using the PSYCLIT and SOCIOFILE databases at Forsyth Library at Fort Hays State University was conducted,

3. a review of the related literature was completed,

4. two instruments were developed by the researcher,

5. instruments were critiqued by four professors and alterations made,

6. a thesis proposal was written, presented and defended to the thesis committee,

7. subjects were selected,

8. the data were collected,

9. the data were analyzed,

10. the final report was written,

11. the thesis was compiled, presented and defended to the thesis committee, and

12. the final copy was edited and produced.

Data Analysis

The following were compiled:

1. appropriate descriptive statistics,

2. two-way analysis of variance (general linear model),

3. Bonferroni (Dunn) t-test for means, and
4. Duncan's multiple range test for means.

Results

The purpose of the researcher was to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate college students toward a reported incident of domestic turbulence. The independent variables examined were gender, marital status, age, family structure, and experience with domestic abuse. Two scenarios were employed: scenario A was in the form of a fictitious police report and contained a provocation statement by the wife and scenario B which was identical with the exception that it did not have any reference to verbal provocation by the wife. The dependent variables were scores from each of the five statements on the scenario questionnaire. The total sample size consisted of 172 undergraduate students in the social science department. Four questionnaires were incomplete leaving a total of 168 used in the analyses. The sample included 75 male and 93 female subjects. Over half (69%) of the students were in the 19-21 age group. Five composite null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance using a two-way analysis of variance (general linear model). The results section was organized according to composite null hypotheses for ease of reference.

Information pertaining to each composite null hypothesis was presented in a common format.

It was hypothesized in composite null hypothesis number 1 that the differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to gender and type of scenario will not be statistically significant. Information pertaining to composite null hypothesis number 1 was presented in Table 1. The following were cited in Table 1: variables, sample sizes, means, standard deviations, *F* values, and *p* levels.

Table 1: A Comparison of Mean Questionnaire Scores According to Gender Employing a Two-Way Analysis of Variance.

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Seriousness of Incident			
Gender (A)					
Female	92	2.1	1.17	0.36	.5516
Male	76	2.2	1.07		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.3	1.06	2.34	.1281
No Provocation	82	2.0	1.18		
		Interactions			
		A X B		0.47	.4929
		Responsibility of Husband			
Gender (A)					
Female	92	1.9	1.27	0.92	.3388
Male	76	1.8	1.01		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.2[a]	1.12	19.53	.0001
No Provocation	82	1.5[b]	1.08		
		Interactions			
		A X B		0.03	.8550

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Responsibility of Wife			
Gender (A)					
Female	92	4.0	1.24	0.00	.9974
Male	76	4.0	1.18		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	3.4[a]	1.15	46.00	.0001
No Provocation	82	4.5[b]	0.98		
		Interactions			
		A X B		0.87	.3533
		Call Police			
Gender (A)					
Female	92	2.3	1.37	0.83	.3643
Male	76	2.5	1.24		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.7[a]	1.24	10.08	.0018
No Provocation	82	2.1[b]	1.31		
		Interactions			
		A X B		1.09	.2975

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Assault Charge			
Gender (A)					
Female	92	2.1	1.27	0.01	.9403
Male	76	2.1	1.15		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.5[a]	1.20	17.80	.0001
No Provocation	82	1.7[b]	1.10		
		Interactions			
		A X B		0.53	.4666

*The smaller the value the greater the agreement.
[ab]Difference of statistical significance at the .05 level according to Bonferroni (Dunn) t-test for means.

Four of the 15 p values were statistically significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypotheses for these comparisons were rejected. The 4 significant comparisons were for the following main effects:

(1) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband,

(2) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife,

(3) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Call Police, and

(4) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Assault Charge.

Table 1 indicated the following for main effects:

(1) subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated the Responsibility of Husband as statistically higher than subjects who received the provocation scenario,

(2) subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Wife higher than subjects who received the no provocation scenario,

(3) subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Call Police higher than subjects who received the provocation scenario, and

(4) subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Assault Charge higher than subjects who received the provocation scenario.

It was hypothesized in composite null hypothesis number 2 that the differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to marital status and type of scenario will not be statistically significant. Information pertaining to composite null hypothesis number 2 was presented in Table 2. The following were cited in Table 2: variables, sample sizes, means, standard deviations, *F* values, and *p* levels.

Table 2: A Comparison of Mean Questionnaire Scores According to Marital Status Employing a Two-Way Analysis of Variance

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Seriousness of Incident			
Marital Status (A)					
Never Married	136	2.1	1.00		
Married	22	2.4	1.68	1.03	.3592
Other	10	2.2	1.32		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.3	1.06	0.69	.4071
No Provocation	82	2.0	1.18		
		Interaction			
		A X B		9.23	.0002
		Responsibility of Husband			
Marital Status (A)					
Never Married	136	1.8	1.09		
Married	22	2.0	1.46	0.60	.5474
Other	10	2.0	1.41		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.2	1.12	1.79	.1833
No Provocation	82	1.5	1.08		
		Interaction			
		A X B		3.00	.0524

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Responsibility of Wife			
Marital Status (A)					
Never Married	136	4.0	1.18		
Married	22	4.0	1.36	0.05	.9490
Other	10	4.1	1.37		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	3.4	1.15	3.08	.0813
No Provocation	82	4.5	0.98		
		Interaction			
		A X B		5.21	.0064
		Called Police			
Marital Status (A)					
Never Married	136	2.4	1.25		
Married	22	2.8	1.57	1.41	.2470
Other	10	2.2	1.55		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.7	1.24	1.55	.2144
No Provocation	82	2.1	1.31		
		Interaction			
		A X B		3.17	.0445

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Assault Charge			
Marital Status (A)					
Never Married	136	2.1	1.14		
Married	22	2.1	1.57	0.07	.9305
Other	10	2.2	1.32		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.5	1.20	3.60	.0594
No Provocation	82	1.7	1.10		
		Interaction			
		A X B		2.54	.0822

*The smaller the value the greater the agreement.

Four of the 15 p values were statistically significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypotheses for these comparisons were rejected. The 4 significant p values were for interactions. The following interactions were statistically significant:

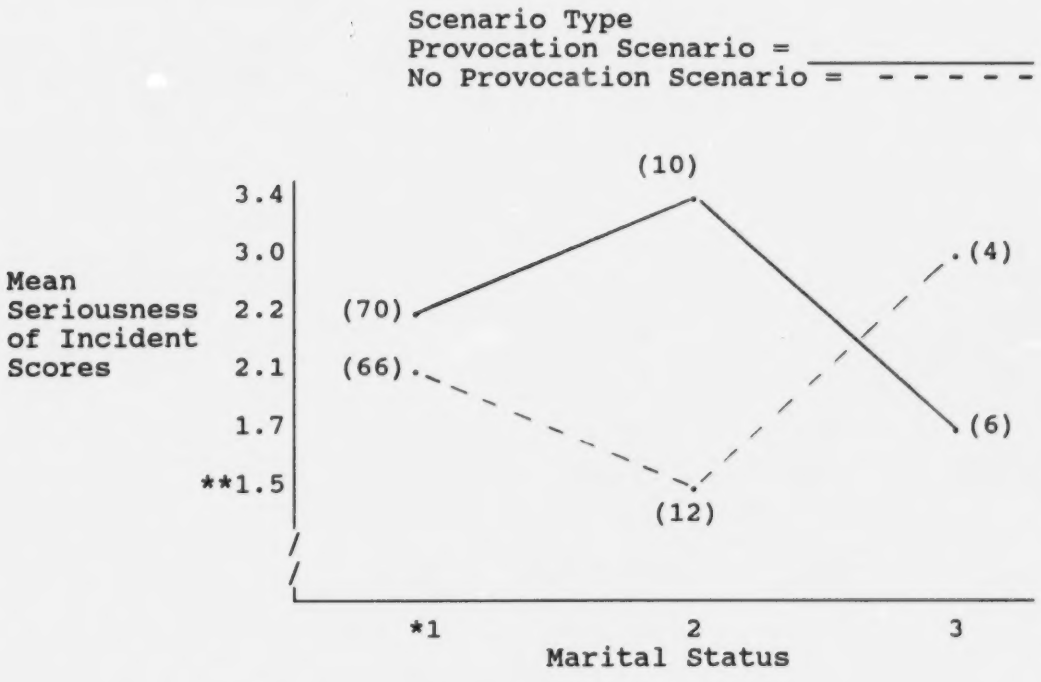
(1) scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Seriousness of Incident,

(2) scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband,

(3) scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife, and

(4) scenario type and marital status for dependent variable Call Police.

Figure 1: Interaction Between Scenario Type and Marital Status for the Dependent Variable Seriousness of Incident



*1 = never married, 2 = married and, 3 = other
**The smaller the value the greater the agreement

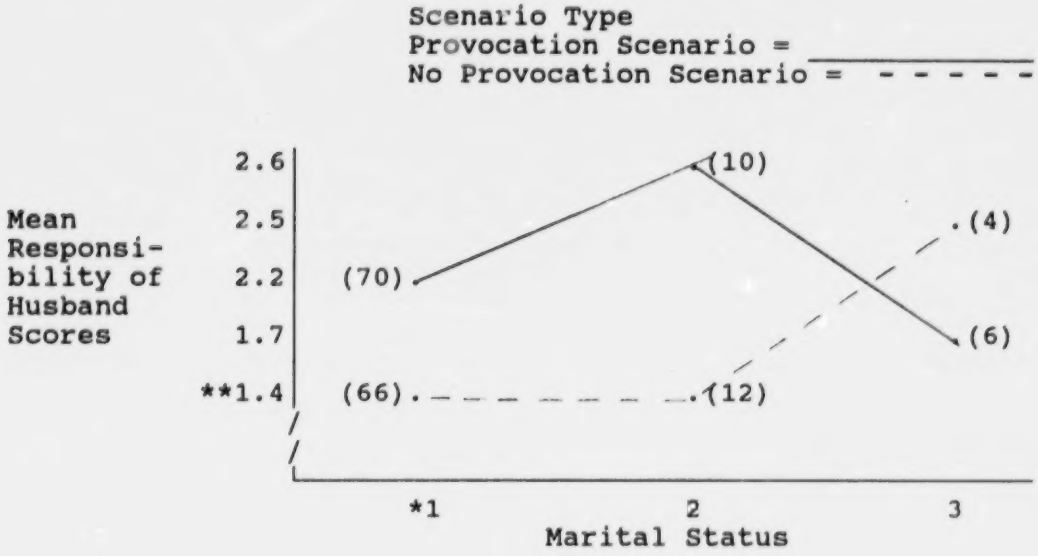
The interaction between scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Seriousness of Incident was disordinal. The results cited in Figure 1 indicated the following information:

(1) married subjects who received the no provocation scenario and other subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Seriousness of Incident numerically higher than any other subgroups, and

(2) married subjects who received the no provocation scenario and other subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Seriousness of Incident numerically higher than any other subgroup.

The interaction between scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband was depicted in profile plot. The following were cited in Figure 2, Responsibility of Husband mean scores and curves for scenario type.

Figure 2: Interaction Between Scenario Type and Marital Status for the Dependent Variable Responsibility of Husband



*1 = never married, 2 = married and, 3 = other
**The smaller the value the greater the agreement

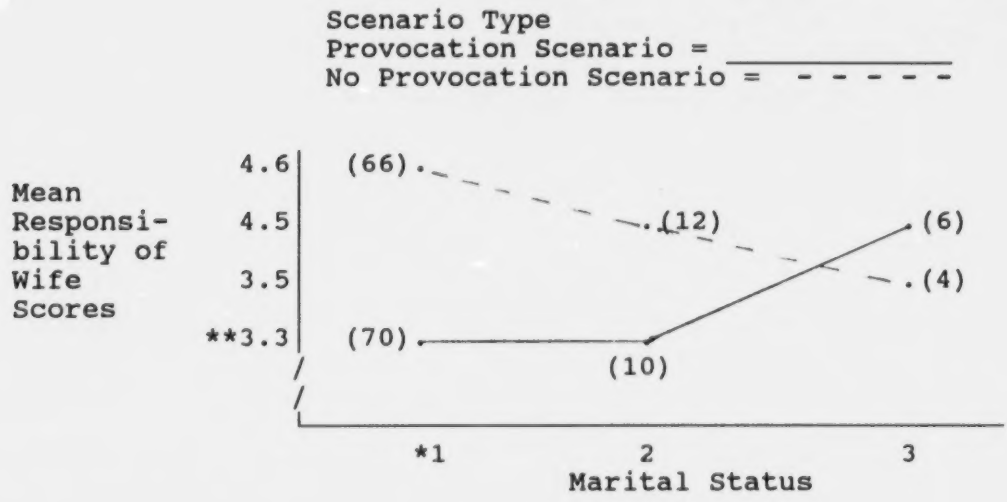
The interaction between scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband was disordinal. The results cited in Figure 2 indicated the following information:

(1) never married and married subjects who received the no provocation scenario and other subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Husband numerically higher than any other subgroups, and

(2) never married subjects and married subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Husband numerically lower than any other subgroup.

The interaction between scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife was depicted in a profile plot. The following were cited in Figure 3, Responsibility of Wife mean scores and curves for scenario type.

Figure 3: Interaction Between Scenario Type and Marital Status for the Dependent Variable Responsibility of Wife



*1 = never married, 2 = married and, 3 = other
**The smaller the value the greater the agreement

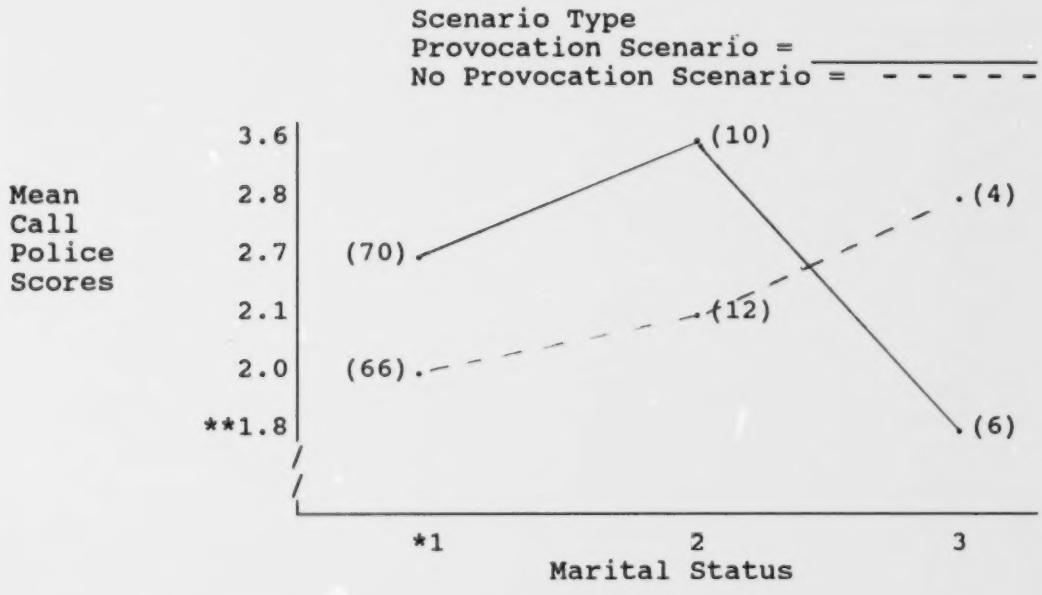
The interaction between scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife was disordinal. The results cited in Figure 3 indicated the following information:

(1) never married subjects and married subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Wife numerically lower of all groups, and

(2) never married subjects and married subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Wife higher than other subgroup.

The interaction between scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Call Police was depicted in a profile plot. The following were cited in Figure 4, Call Police mean scores and curves for scenario type.

Figure 4: Interaction Between Scenario Type and Marital Status for the Dependent Variable Call Police



*1 = never married, 2 = married and, 3 = other
**The smaller the value the greater the agreement

The interaction between scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Call Police was disordinal. The results cited in Figure 4 indicated the following information:

(1) never married and married subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Call Police numerically higher than any other subgroup, and

(2) never married and married subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Call Police numerically lower than any other subgroup.

It was hypothesized in composite null hypothesis number 3 that the differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to age and type of scenario will not be statistically significant. Information pertaining to composite null hypothesis number 3 was presented in Table 3. The following were cited in Table 3: variables, sample sizes, means, standard deviations, *F* values, and *p* levels.

Table 3: A Comparison of Mean Questionnaire Scores According to Age Employing a Two-Way Analysis of Variance

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Seriousness of Incident			
Age (A)					
18 or under	12	2.8	1.42		
19-21	100	2.7	1.00		
				1.66	.1772
22-25	32	2.7	0.98		
26+	24	2.4	1.53		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.3	1.06		
				1.11	.2934
No Provocation	82	2.0	1.18		
		Interaction			
		A X B		.22	.8827
		Responsibility of Husband			
Age (A)					
18 or under	12	2.2	1.59		
19-21	100	1.8	1.09		
				.52	.6694
22-25	32	1.8	1.06		
26+	24	1.9	1.38		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.2[a]	1.12		
				10.45	.0015
No Provocation	82	1.5[b]	1.08		
		Interaction			
		A X B		1.16	.3288

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Responsibility of Wife			
Age (A)					
18 or under	12	3.6	1.68		
19-21	100	4.0	1.15		
				0.58	.6318
22-25	32	4.1	1.16		
26+	24	4.0	1.30		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	3.4[a]	1.15		
				25.51	.0001
No Provocation	82	4.5[b]	0.98		
		Interaction			
		A X B		2.55	.0575
		Call Police			
Age (A)					
18 or under	12	2.5	1.78		
19-21	100	2.4	1.23		
				.30	.8278
22-25	32	2.5	1.27		
26+	24	2.3	1.49		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.7	1.24		
				2.01	.1583
No Provocation	82	2.1	1.31		
		Interaction			
		A X B		1.24	.2964

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Assault Charge			
Age (A)					
18 or under	12	2.58	1.68		
19-21	100	2.11	1.19		
				0.75	.5249
22-25	32	1.97	1.12		
26+	24	2.16	1.43		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.5[a]	1.20		
				6.97	.0091
No Provocation	82	1.7[b]	1.10		
		Interaction			
		A X B		0.33	.8065

*The smaller the value the greater the agreement.
[ab]Difference of statistical significance at the .05 level according to Bonferroni (Dunn) t-test for means.

Three of the 15 p values were statistically significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypotheses for these comparisons were rejected. The 3 significant comparisons were for the following main effects:

(1) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband (recurring, Table 1),

(2) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife (recurring, Table 1), and

(3) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Assault Charge (recurring, Table 1).

It was hypothesized in composite null hypothesis number 4 that the differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to family structure and type of scenario will not be statistically significant. Information pertaining to composite null hypothesis number 4 was presented in Table 4. The following were cited in Table 4: variables, sample sizes, means, standard deviations, F values, and p levels.

Table 4: A Comparison of Mean Scenario Questionnaire Scores According to Family Structure Employing a Two-Way Analysis of Variance

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
Seriousness of Incident					
Family Structure					
Two Biological Parents	131	2.2	1.11		
One Biological, One Step	12	2.2	1.27		
				0.99	.4009
One Sgl. Divorced	18	1.9	0.83		
Other	7	2.4	1.81		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.3[d]	1.06		
				6.82	.0099
No Provocation	82	2.0[e]	1.18		
Interaction					
A X B				1.39	.2475
Responsibility of Husband					
Family Structure					
Two Biological	131	1.9	1.17		
One Biological, One Step	12	1.6	1.00		
				1.32	.2683
One Sgl. Divorced	18	1.8	0.81		
Other	7	2.3	1.89		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.2[a]	1.12		
				14.10	.0002
No Provocation	82	1.5[b]	1.08		
Interaction					
A X B				0.79	.5016

Table 4 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Responsibility of Wife			
Family Structure					
Two Biological Parents	131	3.9	1.22		
One Biological, One Step	12	4.3	1.06		
				1.30	.2763
One Sgl. Divorced	18	4.1	1.06		
Other	7	4.0	1.73		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	3.3[a]	1.15		
				32.84	.0001
No Provocation	82	4.5[b]	0.98		
		Interaction			
		A X B		2.54	.0585
		Call Police			
Family Structure					
Two Biological Parents	131	2.4	1.22		
One Biolgoical, One Step	12	2.3	1.15		
				2.21	.0887
One Sgl. Divorced	18	2.1	1.18		
Other	7	3.3	1.89		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.7[a]	1.24		
				5.82	.0170
No Provocation	82	2.1[b]	1.31		
		Interaction			
		A X B		0.37	.7776

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Assault Charge			
Family Structure					
Two Biological Parents	131	2.1	1.16		
One Biological, One Step	12	2.0	1.48		
				1.67	.1756
One Sgl. Divorced	18	1.9	1.16		
Other	7	2.7	1.80		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.5[a]	1.20		
				13.73	.0003
No Provocation	82	1.7[b]	1.10		
		Interaction			
		A X B		0.75	.5212

*The smaller the value the greater the agreement.

[ab]Difference of statistical significance at the .05 level according to Bonferroni (Dunn) t-test for means.

[de]Difference statistically significant at the .05 level according to Duncan's multiple range test for means.

Five of the 15 p levels were statistically significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypotheses for these comparisons were rejected. The 5 significant comparisons were for the following main effects:

(1) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Seriousness of Incident,

(2) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband (recurring, Table 1),

(3) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife (recurring, Table 1),

(4) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Call Police (recurring, Table 1), and

(5) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Assault Charge (recurring, Table 1).

Table 4 indicated new information pertaining to main effects: subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Seriousness of Incident statistically higher than subjects who received the provocation scenario.

It was hypothesized in composite null hypothesis number 5 that the differences among mean scenario questionnaire scores according to Personal Experience and type of scenario will not be statistically significant. Information pertaining to composite null hypothesis number

5 was presented in Table 5. The following were cited in Table 5: variables, sample sizes, means, standard deviations, *F* values and *p* levels.

Table 5: A Comparison of Mean Scenario Questionnaire Scores According to Personal Experience

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Seriousness of Incident			
Personal Experience (A)					
None	63	2.2	1.16		
One	64	2.1	1.02		
				1.05	.3706
Two	24	1.9	0.85		
All	17	2.8	1.62		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.3	1.06		
				1.52	.2201
No Provocation	82	2.0	1.18		
		Interaction			
		A X B		.04	.9879
		Responsibility of Husband			
Personal Experience (A)					
None	63	2.1	1.29		
One	64	1.7	1.03		
				1.05	.3703
Two	24	1.6	0.93		
All	17	1.8	1.38		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.2[a]	1.11		
				13.65	.0003
No Provocation	82	1.5[b]	1.08		
		Interaction			
		A X B		0.85	.4700

Table 5 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Responsibility of Wife			
Personal Experience (A)					
None	63	3.7	1.33		
One	64	4.1	1.07		
				1.48	.2214
Two	24	4.3	1.03		
All	17	4.2	1.38		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	3.4[a]	1.15		
				35.03	.0001
No Provocation	82	4.5[b]	0.98		
		Interaction			
		A X B		0.69	.5583
		Call Police			
Personal Experience (A)					
None	63	2.6	1.37		
One	64	2.2	1.22		
				1.78	.1522
Two	24	2.3	1.08		
All	17	2.5	1.62		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.7[a]	1.24		
				4.82	.0295
No Provocation	82	2.1[b]	1.31		
		Interaction			
		A X B		0.70	.5530

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

Variable	n	M*	S	F Value	p Level
		Assault Charge			
Personal Experience (A)					
None	63	2.2	1.27		
One	64	2.0	1.08		
				1.79	.1504
Two	24	1.8	0.98		
All	17	2.5	1.62		
Scenario Type (B)					
Provocation	86	2.5[a]	1.20		
				11.04	.0011
No Provocation	82	1.7[b]	1.10		
		Interaction			
		A X B		0.15	.9306

*The smaller the value the greater the agreement.
[ab]Difference of statistical significance at the .05 level according to Bonferroni (Dunn) t-test for means.

Four of the 15 p values were statistically significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypotheses for these comparisons were rejected. The 4 significant comparisons were for the following main effects:

(1) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband (recurring, Table 1),

(2) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife (recurring, Table 1),

(3) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Call Police (recurring, Table 1), and

(4) for the independent variable scenario type and the dependent variable Assault Charge (recurring, Table 1).

Discussion

Summary

The purpose of the researcher was to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate college students toward a reported incident of domestic turbulence. The five independent variables investigated were gender, marital status, age, family structure, and personal experiences with abuse. Two scenarios were utilized; one contained a provocation statement by the wife and the other did not. The scores of statements following the hypothetical police report were the dependent variables. The 5 statements concerned seriousness of the incident, responsibility of the husband, responsibility of the wife, decision to call police, and charging husband with assault. The total sample size was 168 undergraduate students which included 75 male and 93 female subjects. Five composite null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance. Fifty-five comparisons plus 20 recurring comparisons were

made. Of the 55 comparisons made, 30 were main effects and 25 were interactions. Of the 30 main effects, 5 were statistically significant at the .05 level. Of the 25 interactions, 4 were statistically significant. The significant main effects were the following:

(1) scenario type for the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband,

(2) scenario type for the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife,

(3) scenario type for the dependent variable Call Police,

(4) scenario type for the dependent variable Assault Charge, and

(5) scenario type for the dependent variable Seriousness of the Incident.

The main effects indicated the following:

(1) subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Husband statistically higher than subjects who received the provocation scenario,

(2) subjects who received the provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Wife statistically higher than subjects who received the no provocation scenario,

(3) subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Call Police statistically higher than subjects who received the provocation scenario,

(4) subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Assault Charge statistically higher than subjects who received the provocation scenario, and

(5) subjects who received the no provocation scenario rated Seriousness of Incident statistically higher than subjects who received the provocation scenario.

Of the 25 interactions 4 were statistically significant at the .05 level. The statistically significant interactions were for the following:

(1) scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Seriousness of Incident,

(2) scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Responsibility of Husband,

(3) scenario type and marital status for the dependent variable Responsibility of Wife, and

(4) scenario type and marital status for dependent variable Call Police.

Generalizations

Results of the present study appeared to support the following generalizations:

(1) subjects receiving the no provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Husband higher,

(2) subjects receiving the provocation scenario rated Responsibility of Wife higher,

(3) subjects receiving the no provocation scenario rated Call Police higher,

(4) subjects receiving the no provocation scenario rated Assault Charge higher,

(5) subjects receiving the no provocation scenario rated the Seriousness of Incident higher,

(6) interaction for scenario type and marital status and dependent variable for Seriousness of Incident; interaction for scenario type and marital status and dependent variable Responsibility of Husband; interaction for scenario type and marital status and dependent variable Responsibility of Wife; and interaction of scenario type and marital status and dependent variable Call Police.

The related literature cited in the present study depicted a gender difference in judging the wife based upon her "provoking" the husband (Kristiansen & Giulietti, 1990). However, the findings of the present study indicated that the insertion of obscene language by the wife affected the judgment of both men and women. Just World Theory (Lerner, 1980) postulated that to maintain a sense of control over events people make judgments determined by entitlements. The use of swearing may have been construed as not conforming to a traditional female role. Depicting the wife in a passive manner as in the no

provocation scenario assured that the incident would be taken seriously and judgment as to the responsibility of the husband was not ambiguous.

Recommendations

Results of the present study appeared to support the following recommendations:

(1) this study should be replicated with an additional scenario using race of the couple as a manipulated variable,

(2) this study should be replicated with an additional scenario using social class of the couple as a manipulated variable,

(3) this study should be replicated employing a larger random sample.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire with Scenario A

Please read the following hypothetical police report and answer the questions.

On March 19, 1990, Officers Bean and Smith responded to an anonymous call reporting a possible domestic dispute at 403 Elm Street. Upon arriving at the location, the officers found Mrs. Young, lying on the sofa, holding a wet wash cloth to her head. Officers noted a distinct mark of a handprint on her left cheek.

The officers were told by Mrs. Young that her husband had left the house. She said that the incident had occurred because she had been 45 minutes late getting home from work and decided to prepare left-overs for dinner. After putting them in the oven, she sat down to watch the news on television. About 10 minutes later, her husband arrived and asked, "What's for dinner?" She explained about getting home late and fixing left-overs. On hearing this, Mr. Young became upset and angry. He argued that she should be thinking about her duties to the family and not working late.

As she went back into the kitchen, he followed her, grabbed her by the arm and when she didn't stop, proceeded to slap her on the head and face.

The officers interviewed a neighbor who admitted to making the call to the police. She said she had heard the argument and that Mrs. Young was yelling obscenities and calling her husband a "nagging bastard".

Mr. Young arrived home and was told that his wife was filing an assault complaint against him.

The following statements related to the above report. Circle a number which corresponds to how you judge each statement on a scale of 1 to 5.

		1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree
1.	This incident was very serious	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The husband, Mr. Young, was responsible for the incident.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The wife, Mrs. Young, was responsible for the incident.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Given the circumstances described, I would have called the police.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	The husband, Mr. Young, should be charged with assault.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire with Scenario B

Please read the following hypothetical police report and answer the questions.

On March 19, 1990, Officers Bean and Smith responded to an anonymous call reporting a possible domestic dispute at 403 Elm Street. Upon arriving at the location, the officers found Mrs. Young, lying on the sofa, holding a wet wash cloth to her head. Officers noted a distinct mark of a handprint on her left cheek.

The officers were told by Mrs. Young that her husband had left the house. She said that the incident had occurred because she had been 45 minutes late getting home from work and decided to prepare left-overs for dinner. After putting them in the oven, she sat down to watch the news on television. About 10 minutes later, her husband arrived and asked, "What's for dinner?" She explained about getting home late and fixing left-overs. On hearing this, Mr. Young became upset and angry. He argued that she should be thinking about her duties to the family and not working late.

As she went back into the kitchen, he followed her, grabbed her by the arm and when she didn't stop, proceeded to slap her on the head and face.

Mr. Young arrived home and was told that his wife was filing an assault complaint against him.

The following statements related to the above report. Circle a number which corresponds to how you judge each statement on a scale of 1 to 5.

	1	2	3	4		5
	Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree
1.	This incident was very serious	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The husband, Mr. Young, was responsible for the incident.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The wife, Mrs. Young, was responsible for the incident.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Given the circumstances described, I would have called the police.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	The husband, Mr. Young, should be charged with assault.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

Demographic Sheet

Answer the following by circling the letter of choice. Please answer all questions.

1. **Sex**
   A. Female
   B. Male

2. **Marital Status**
   A. Never Married
   B. Married
   C. Widowed
   D. Divorced

3. **Age**
   A. 18 or under
   B. 19-21 years
   C. 22-25 years
   D. 26 years & above

4. **Religious Preference**
   A. No religious affiliation
   B. Protestant
   C. Catholic
   D. Jewish
   E. Other

5. **Religious Participation**
   A. More than once per week
   B. At least once per week
   C. Several times a year
   D. Rarely
   E. Never

6. The parents or parent who raised me were/are:
   A. Two biological parents
   B. One biological and one step-parent following a death
   C. One biological and one step-parent following a divorce
   D. A widowed single parent
   E. A divorced single parent
   F. Does not apply

7. I have been in an abusive relationship.
   I have witnessed family members in an abusive situation.
   I have witnessed friends in an abusive situation.

   Which of the preceding statements applies to you?
   A. None of the above
   B. One of the above
   C. Two of the above
   D. All of the above

8. Before any official action may be taken, in a domestic violence situation, Kansas law requires that the spouse sign a complaint.
   A. Yes
   B. No

APPENDIX D

Instructions to the Subjects

Good morning/afternoon. I want to thank Professor _____ for giving me a few minutes of his/her classroom time.

I am a graduate student working toward a Masters in Counseling degree. The focus of my research is on the judgment of college students regarding a scenario of domestic turbulence.

The forms that I will be handing you are a demographic survey and a fictitious police report with 5 statements for you to rate on a scale of 1 to 5.

Before handing these out, I would ask that you not write your name on the forms, answer every question so that it can be used in the research, and read the scenario thoroughly before marking the answers following it.

Thank you very much for contributing to this research. If you wish to see the results, it will be available at Forsyth Library following acceptance by the committee.